

IMLS-funded programs and services for older adults*

**Selected list of grantees through LSTA (Library Services & Technology Act) and discretionary programs (National Leadership Grants for Libraries; Laura Bush 21st Century Librarians Program) that have provided services for aging populations. This list is organized by the American Library Association's "Guidelines for Library and Information Services to Older Adults"*

1. Acquire current data about the older population and incorporate into planning and budgeting.

1.1. Kent State University—OH

2005 · \$327,016 · National Leadership Grants for Libraries (Research)

Kent State University investigated the health information-seeking behaviors of older adults in northeastern and Appalachian Ohio including information access, decision-making processes, and the practices of community professionals serving this population. The region's population of older adults had increased rapidly and was often poorly equipped to make important health-related decisions. The project sought to address circumstances that led seniors to rely on inaccurate information, ignore serious problems, or make inappropriate choices regarding their health care. Following their investigation, the researchers made recommendations to help libraries and health care providers offer more effective programs and services.

1.2. Pierce County Public Library—WA

2007 · \$9,645 · LSTA Grant

The "55+ Project" focused on improving services, programming, and volunteer opportunities for seniors; enhancing collections and publicity efforts; forming partnerships; and providing seniors with better customer service. This project resulted in the formation of an advisory council, creation of a community assessment and survey, hosting of focus groups and a community summit, and development of a website.

1.3. Southwest Wisconsin Library System—WI

2007 · \$12,346 · LSTA Grant

"Reaching Out, Looking In: Serving Seniors With Special Needs in Southwest Wisconsin" aimed to promote and enhance library services to seniors with special needs. In December 2006, the project team in collaboration with community partners surveyed seniors on topics such as library usage, collections, and programming. Their responses were analyzed to inform future outreach program efforts, collection development, and delivery services. Results included: organization of outreach workshops; development of marketing plans and publicity materials; and creation of a library card application form in large print.

2. Ensure that the special needs and interests of older adults in your community are reflected in the library's collections, programs, and services.

2.1 Brooklyn Public Library—Brooklyn, NY

2007 · \$28,712 · LSTA Grant

The "Everyone Serves Seniors" project provided system-wide employee training on the social and informational needs of older adults. Project leaders held thirty-eight workshops and developed a robust curriculum which was then distributed to all eight hundred public services staff. Local senior centers, assisted living centers and nursing homes also received the curriculum and training. The library's "Service to Aging" website was also expanded and improved. Among workshop participants, 98% provided positive feedback on the impact of the project in helping them to create and offer programs especially for seniors. Thirty-four percent of the staff noted that community outreach activities had taken place at their branch as a result of the training.

2.2 Julia Hull District Library—IL

2008 · \$28,050 · LSTA Grant

In response to the growing popularity of Macs in their community, the library created a series of programs titled “Mac & Windy Get Married.” The library purchased MacBook laptop computers equipped with Mac OS and Windows OS to expose users to both Mac and PC software. This series not only taught older adults about PC applications and Microsoft software, but also how to use touch pads and wireless devices, along with basic laptop care and maintenance. In addition, community users learned to use other Mac programs such as I-Movie (movie editing), I-Photo (photo editing), and Garage Band (music composition and editing).

2.3 Santa Clara County Library—CA

2008 · \$408,433 · LSTA Grant

The “Get Healthy @ the Library” project focused on the delivery of quality health information to senior adults. Project results included: training for twenty-seven reference staff on handling complex health information questions; revamping the library’s website to include links on the fifteen most common medical concerns for seniors; seven lectures attended by three hundred users on topics such as osteoporosis and fitness; acquisition of an extensive collection of books, DVDs, and online resources; and planning for a new library service, “medical reference by appointment.”

2.4 New York Public Library—NY

2010 · \$35,400 · LSTA Grant

“Becoming an Age-Friendly Library” served older adults through intensive technology courses and targeted library collection development. Through a series of ten-week technology courses and related workshops, the project reached a total of 154 participants with a median age of seventy-two. Follow-up technology training survey data showed positive changes in participants’ skills and attitudes. The library also added related technology titles to its collection to continue serving this older adult patron base. In both the coursework and collection development aspects, the project reached speakers of English and Spanish alike.

2.5 Metropolitan Library Service Agency—MN

2010 · \$76,131 · LSTA Grant

The “Brain Fitness Project” provided brain health education to over one thousand users in the St. Paul metro area through one-hour workshops and self-directed brain fitness stations. Fifty “Maintain Your Brain” public education workshops held in member libraries and outreach partner sites reached 657 participants. Among workshop attendees aged fifty-five and older, 99% reported increased knowledge of a healthy brain in relation to overall health and normal aging. The project team also installed twenty-nine Brain Fitness Stations in member libraries and outreach partner sites consisting of circulating books, handouts, and do-it-yourself brain fitness games and activities.

2.6 Hayward Public Library—CA

2010 · \$15,000 · LSTA Grant

In response to the success of an earlier “Transforming Life After 50 Program” grant, the library designed, promoted, and delivered a series of encore programs for the 50+ community that addressed their desire for intergenerational programming. These included five poetry workshops, one poetry slam performance, three writing workshops, a bestselling author series, and two Book-to-Action events that included book discussions and author presentations followed by service projects at two community gardens. Promotional materials associated with the Book-to-Action project won first place in the California Library Association PReXcellence Award in the less than five million dollar budget category.

2.7 Sam Houston State University - Newton Gresham Library—TX

2010 · \$8,000 · LSTA Grant

The “TexTreasures Grants” project documented and made widely accessible a collection of sixty-six oral history videos featuring Texas military veterans. Oral histories in the collection were conducted by the Library of Congress Veterans History Project or donated by the HEARTS Veterans Museum of Texas. The library outsourced oral history transcription, to provide full-text searching capabilities for the entire collection of videos. Library staff provided quality assurance, video conversion, search functionality, metadata development, and OCLC cataloging to make the videos globally accessible. They also added direct links to the collection through a number of related Wikipedia articles.

3. *Make the library’s collections and physical facilities safe, comfortable and inviting for all older adults.*

3.1 Onondaga County Public Library—NY

2009 · \$29,536 · LSTA Grant

The “Starburst Accessibility Project” was developed to meet the needs of users with low vision by purchasing assistive computer technology. Staff from nine branch libraries received training in the use of the ZoomText and Jaws software. The library partnered with the National Adult Education Organization (NAEO), a community provider of adult education classes, at a local shopping center. This partnership resulted in the installation of adaptive equipment at fifteen workstations in NAEO’s continuing education center.

3.2 Office of Commonwealth Libraries—PA

2009 · \$34,337 · 2010 · \$29,048 · LSTA Grant

“Senior Spaces: Pennsylvania Style!” was a statewide initiative designed to foster innovative services for three generations of adults: baby boomers, older adult retirees, and the elderly. Allen Kleiman developed the concept of “senior spaces,” which provides not only a physical space for active seniors but also programming in the areas of lifelong learning, civic engagement, health and wellness, and volunteering. Over two years of the program, thirteen Pennsylvania libraries were awarded \$4,000 each to implement their own “senior spaces”. As part of the project, each library also convened a Senior Space (Older Adult) Advisory Committee made up of patrons in their communities.

4. *Make the library a focal point for information services to older adults.*

4.1 Eureka Public Library District—IL

2007 · \$4,900 · LSTA Grant

The library organized nine informational seminars to address the needs of underserved seniors residing in our rural areas. Topics included health, education, employment and safety concerns. Seniors learned about services offered in their community as well as what services they can offer. The library reported that access to the collections increased as a result of the seminars and senior fair: circulation of workshop-related materials increased by 12%; interlibrary loan requests for similar materials rose by 8%; and fifty-seven new print titles and two additional software licenses were added based on patron requests.

4.2 Americans for Libraries Council (ALC) and partners in NY, CT, and VA

2007 · \$241,808 · National Leadership Grants for Libraries (Library-Museum Collaboration)

The “Re-Imagining Age Project, Inc.” developed public programming among cultural institutions that engaged intergenerational audiences in exploring the American aging experience from historical, cultural, and artistic perspectives. Project communities of Norfolk, VA; Hartford, CT; and Suffolk County, NY were selected for their relatively large numbers of active older residents. ALC, its National Advisors, and partners worked with the demonstration communities to develop an Age in America Programming Guide, provide content and technical expertise, and ensure online and face-to-face networking. A culminating report, “Designs for Change: Libraries and Museum Collaborations on Aging,” enabled local libraries and museums to build a community of practice.

4.3 San Anselmo Public Library—CA

2008 · \$8,277 · LSTA Grant

The “Boomers and Bloggers” program provided a series of classes for adults, ages 50+ on navigating and evaluating websites, using social networking tools, and downloading mp3 files. Tech-savvy teens were recruited as instructors and trained by library staff to recognize diverse learning styles and negotiate generational differences. This project resulted in a library blog, the formation of a teen advisory group, and overall awareness of the information and technical needs of both older adults and teens.

4.4 Califa Group—CA

2009 · \$338,839 · LSTA Grant

“Get Involved: Powered By Your Library” was a statewide initiative designed to expand the visibility and contributions of skilled volunteers through public libraries. With tens of thousands of Californians, especially baby boomers, seeking new ways to make a difference in their community, public libraries can engage this talent to extend their capacity and develop advocates for their services. Results of this project include the implementation of volunteer engagement workplans by twelve library teams and the posting of 775 volunteer opportunities on VolunteerMatch (<http://www.californialibraries.volunteermatch.org>), of which 9,238 referrals were tracked back to that site. Seventy percent of participating libraries engaged volunteers in high impact roles.

4.5 County of Los Angeles Public Library—CA

2009 · \$14,329 · LSTA Grant

The “Baby Boomer Volunteer Recruitment” project developed tools and resources for publicizing volunteer opportunities at the library. Marketing materials consisting of posters and bookmarks were distributed at community events, online via the library’s web page, and at senior centers and parks near the county libraries. The library also developed an online volunteer application and an evaluation form.

4.6 University of Maryland at College Park—MD

2009 · \$387,541 · Laura Bush 21st Century Librarians Program (Research in Early Careers Development)

In this Early Career Development project, Bo Xie of the University of Maryland's College of Information Studies designed a public-library-based program to provide high-quality, Internet-based health information to seniors from diverse backgrounds. Grounded in participatory design methodology, the research project incorporated a cadre of committed, older adult volunteers who helped design the curriculum and served as peer trainers, teaching other senior volunteers how to access, assess, and use a broad range of quality online resources. The resulting curricula, procedures, and other guides, were made available to public libraries nationwide.

4.7 Bucks County Public Libraries—PA

2010 · \$30,000 · LSTA Grant

The “Information Literacy for Seniors” project connected 55+ library patrons to Web 2.0 technologies through classes, technology gadget fairs and a targeted website. Library staff and volunteers were trained to facilitate classes for this community of older patrons, and the project team developed related web tutorials. To date, eighty-six classes focused on email, social networking technologies and digital cameras have reached 347 people, of which 97% reported increased knowledge as a result of the class. Three participating libraries offered technology gadget fairs, several of which were held during senior expos that numbered approximately two hundred attendees.

5. Target the older population in library programming.

5.1 California State Library—CA

2007 · \$163,909; 2009 · \$366,518 · LSTA Grant

“California of the Past” was a statewide pilot project that aimed to document the recollections of baby boomers and aging adults. Users were invited to recall and record stories about California’s history at digital storytelling stations installed in six pilot libraries. The stories were then posted online (<http://www.digitalstorystation.com>) for all users to view. The libraries also held community screenings throughout the year.

5.2 Tempe Public Library—AZ

2007 · \$51,034 · LSTA Grant

The “Academic Connection” program provided seniors with fourteen college-level courses taught by emeritus professors from Arizona State University. Eighty-eight percent of the 280 individuals enrolled were sixty and over. Course titles included: Literary Traditions in the Bible; Virginia Woolf; What Do Diseases Look Like?; Paradise Lost as Divine Comedy; Mexican American History and Culture; Sports and Politics; The Key to Arithmetic; and Modern Cosmology: The Origin of the Universe and its Contents. These courses allowed the library to offer more challenging and intellectually interesting programs to the older adult community, many of whom expressed that they did not find typical senior center programs to be of interest to them. The grant also allowed the library to develop a partnership with ASU Emeritus College members who, though retired, still had a great interest in teaching and sharing their knowledge and expertise with community members.

5.3 Oak Bluffs Public Library—MA

2008 · \$15,100 · LSTA Grant

Together with its adult advisory council the library developed an intergenerational gaming series featuring a Nintendo Wii, Kindle, and a variety of board games. One of the most successful events, “Bowling Returns to Oak Bluffs,” used the bowling game included with Wii Sports and featured a slideshow documenting some of the bowling alleys that have since closed down. Library staff visited the Martha’s Vineyard Museum to search for photographs and postcards of the bowling alleys and several members of the community were interviewed about their experiences at the bowling alleys.

5.4 Upper Hudson Library System—NY

2010 · \$17,400 · LSTA Grant

The “Tell Me About It” project captured life experiences from Albany-area seniors and shared them to the larger community through digital and print story formats. With the help of a professional storyteller and photographer, participating seniors crafted their stories and illustrated them with digitized photos. To promote intergenerational exchange, community teens worked with the seniors to record, edit, and broadcast their stories as audio podcasts and online videos. The project resulted in twelve oral histories that are accessible through the library website as well as in a book format. The five participating libraries also created new partnerships with local organizations and reached a total of 322 people over sixty-one programs.

5.5 Oregon Institute of Technology—OR

2010 · \$32,587 · LSTA Grant

The Shaw Historical Library's project at the Oregon Institute of Technology, "Seniors to Seniors," collected oral histories of long-time residents to document local 20th Century history. Retirees and other volunteers recorded twenty-two interviews and completed eighteen interview logs and nine interview transcripts. Through this process they also developed an oral history transcription style guide and operations guide to help sustain the project after the grant period. They collected and processed archival materials through the completion of six finding aids and work on five more. Among other outcomes, the project grew the library volunteer base by fifty-one new participants, increased library hours with volunteer support, grew local history collections, and forged community connections to secure future acquisitions.

5.6 Hartford Public Library—CT

2010 · \$16,048 · LSTA Grant

The "Arts & Archives" project of the library's main branch provided local seniors with heritage-based seminars and hands-on fine arts and humanities workshops taught by professional artists. The series offered classes focused on pen and ink drawing, sculpture, poetry, digital photography, music appreciation, mixed media, and memoir writing, and it utilized library collections to enrich the hands-on instruction. A majority of the 136 participants were over the age of fifty-five and had no previous formal training in the selected medium. Following thirty-five workshop sessions, participants contributed seventy original works of art to a curated exhibition in the library's ArtWalk gallery space.

5.7 First Regional Library—MS

2010 · \$14,949 · LSTA Grant

Through "Elders Remember Panola County Music" the library documented important local music history by training teenagers to conduct oral histories with seniors, which were made available to the larger community in DVD and online video formats. Funds also expanded the library's collection of local music history resources with input and donations from local residents. The library wrapped up the project with a release program to introduce the oral history DVDs and new collection materials to the community, and it gained wider recognition of the program by showcasing its interviews at a blues festival in Clarksdale.

5.8 Azusa City Library—CA

2010 · \$9,957 · LSTA Grant

To increase older adults' comfort level with technology and social networking, the "Taming Technology" project offered a series of hands-on training sessions targeted to baby boomers. Library staff and community experts developed and taught an initial set of nine programs, and the most popular six were offered a second time. A total of fifty-five adults participated in the fifteen training sessions, and 97% of participant survey responses indicated that sessions increased attendees' technological knowledge and comfort level.

5.9 Athens-Clarke County Library—GA

2010 · \$343,100 · National Leadership Grants for Libraries (Library-Museum Collaboration)

Together with the Lyndon House Arts Center, the Athens-Clarke County Library developed new services and programs for its baby boomer population. The project website (<http://www.boomersinathens.org>) promotes program offerings, including "Community Snapshots," which showcase local baby boomers' expertise through live webcasts. The project also record locals' stories and memories to highlight and share community diversity. As a result, the partnership expands library and museum services beyond existing walls and offers a best practices model to engage active older adults in the work and mission of libraries and museums in their communities.

6. Reach out to older adults who are unable to travel to the library.

6.1 Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library—CT

2007 · \$18,447 · LSTA Grant

Through “Homebound Services,” the library provided homebound and older adults access to library services via volunteer delivery services. The project targeted two related groups: Meals on Wheels participants and patrons already receiving the books-by-mail service. As a result of LSTA funding, 240 deliveries were made with approximately four hundred items circulated and twenty-two homebound patrons became new library users. Forty-five percent of older adults surveyed reported that their quality of life and learning experiences were enhanced or improved as a result of this project.

6.2 Ritchie County Public Library—WV

2009 · \$2,769 · LSTA Grant

The library established a book club at the Pine View Nursing Home. Staff from the nursing home and library worked together to register residents for library cards, provide information about a variety of library services, and gather feedback on reading preferences. As a result, the library’s outreach coordinator ordered large print titles for approximately a dozen residents and hosted seven lively book discussions.

6.3 Saint Johns County Public Library - Southeast Branch—FL

2009 · \$222,892 · LSTA Grant

“The Library Express Outreach” project targeted seniors living in nursing homes, assisted living facilities and adult day care centers. Seniors at twenty-seven facilities were able to access services such as books-by-mail and paperback reading exchange depots. In addition, the library established eight additional deposit collections totaling 40-50 items. These outreach services were carried out by a core group of trained volunteers.

6.4 Las Vegas-Clark County Library District—NV

2010 · \$78,529 · LSTA Grant

The “Words on Wheels” senior service program expanded library outreach to places where seniors gather and delivered materials to those lacking mobility. The program built from an existing library delivery service by adding new sites to its route as well as five additional staff hours per week and a new delivery truck with additional carrying capacity. The total number of seniors served went from 2,570 to 3,006 with the addition of two new delivery sites, and the number of delivered materials doubled with the introduction of the new truck. The program also premiered a new book talks service to all its senior centers, with one of the library’s most experienced reader service librarians visiting each site during the course of the year.

6.5 Lee County Library System—FL

2010 · \$9,995 · LSTA Grant

“Community Conversations” developed a volunteer corps to provide intellectually stimulating library programs for older adults living in senior residential facilities, attending adult daycare programs, or participating in congregate meal programs. As part of the project, the library expanded its collection of programming materials and hosted invitational workshops on reminiscence-based programming for library staff and senior service providers.

7. Train the library's staff to serve older adults with courtesy and respect.

7.1 California Library Association—CA

2007 · \$340,840 · LSTA Grant

The project introduced libraries to a new framework for working with active, older adults by aligning lifelong learning and opportunities for civic engagement. A three-day training program called “Transforming Life after 50” was held by the California State Library, Libraries for the Future, and Lifelong Access Libraries to promote baby boomers as resources for the community. Participating libraries also conducted a community assessment of their own local boomer populations with the help of a consulting team. These libraries were then eligible to apply for grants of up to \$20,000 to provide programs addressing the needs defined by the community assessment. The training also targeted recruitment of baby boomers as volunteers in library organizations.

7.2 Missouri State Library—MO

2008 · \$122,385 · LSTA Grant

This statewide effort to improve services to adults included training for library staff on technology and health programming for seniors. A pilot initiative involving the Osher Lifelong Learning Center brought seventy-nine seniors from four rural areas together via video conference with classes taught by experts in horticulture, Missouri history, and politics.

7.3 Peninsula Library System—CA

2009 · \$170,025 · Laura Bush 21st Century Librarians Program (Continuing Education)

The Peninsula Library System, partnering with state library agencies in California, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, offered a “Transforming Life after 50” fellowship program to practicing librarians designed to improve library services to older adults. Fellows learned from leaders in the field of aging, health, lifelong learning, and civic engagement, in order to apply their lessons to libraries. As a result, fellows experienced positive changes in attitudes and understanding of aging issues and were better equipped to implement innovative models for library service to seniors.

7.4 California State Library—CA

2010 · \$121,507 · LSTA Grant

Following the success of the “Transforming Life After 50” multi-state fellowship program, this project expanded the community of California library professionals working to better serve adults ages fifty and older. To support over ninety participating librarians in their year-long, continuing education fellowship, the California State Library identified speakers for the fellowship institute, facilitated six online learning courses, enhanced related websites, created an online “innovators community”, and offered targeted grants to twelve California-based fellowship participants to implement new approaches in their libraries. Based on final assessment surveys, fellowship participants reported increased knowledge, and 94% went on to make progress in implementing enhanced service and engagement strategies for older adults.

7.5 Westchester Library System—NY

2011 · \$450,000 · National Leadership Grants for Libraries (Demonstration)

The Westchester Library System, in partnership with Lifetime Arts, Inc., and the American Library Association’s Public Programs Office, demonstrated a new and robust model for public libraries to deliver and sustain meaningful instructional arts programs for an aging population. By demonstrating approaches for implementing creative aging programs in urban, suburban, and rural library systems, this project served as an example for similar capacity-building initiatives. Partners included the Brooklyn Public Library, Clinton Essex Franklin Library System and the New York Public Library.

There are many other IMLS-funded programs and services for older adults throughout the United States. For more information, please contact imlsinfo@imls.gov.